

# Lake Maloney

## 2009 Survey Summary



Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

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The following text and graphs are the results of gill net surveys completed during fall of 2009 at Lake Maloney. Fish populations are sampled each fall using gill nets, a method commonly used to sample fish found primarily in open water, such as walleye, channel catfish, and wipers. For comparative purposes, results from previous years are also shown. Graphs show the average number of fish caught per net and the relative abundance of fish within several length categories. The text provides a brief explanation of the information shown in the graphs. Also included are numbers of master angler fish awards issued for Maloney Reservoir.

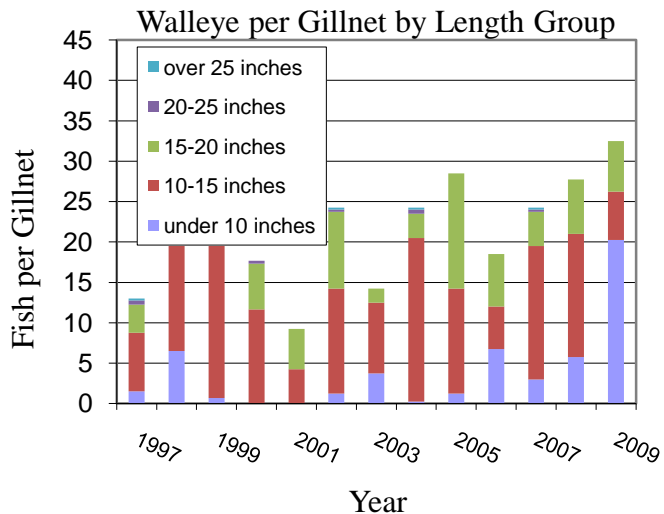
During the winter of 2009, Lake Maloney was dewatered to facilitate repairs to the dam. Nebraska Public Power District controls water levels at Lake Maloney as well as operation and maintenance of the dam. Lake levels were lowered during the fall but should recover in the spring of 2010. At this point we are unsure how the fishery will be impacted by the low water situation.

Lake Maloney generally has high catch rates for walleye, but large individuals are usually far and few between. The size structure for walleye in Maloney is comprised mainly of fish less than 15 inches and this was the case in 2009. Catch rates were approximately 32 fish per net but there weren't many "keepers" in the sample. White bass numbers have increased substantially in the last few years. Catch rates were approximately 36 fish per net but most of the fish were on the short side. Wipers have historically been an important part of the Maloney fishery but most of these fish were harvested prematurely as "white bass". Wipers are not intended to replace white bass but rather to provide trophy fish opportunity. Wiper numbers were down in 2009 but half of the fish sampled were larger than 15 inches. We will continue to stock wipers but the rates will be lower and possibly less frequently. However, white bass populations will be closely monitored and white bass stockings will take place if natural recruitment does not provide enough fish for anglers. Catfish numbers are good at Maloney although numbers of large fish seem to be lacking.

The past several years boat access has been somewhat difficult in the spring due to low water levels and no winter inflows. Walleye, wipers, and white bass are caught throughout the reservoir by drifting live bait, trolling crankbaits, or by vertical jigging. Good areas are flats that are located near deeper water, and near the outlet of the lake. The inlet area also provides excellent opportunities for those that are forced to fish from the bank. In the fall, look for gulls that are feeding on shad. If schools of baitfish are found, the predator fish are not far behind!

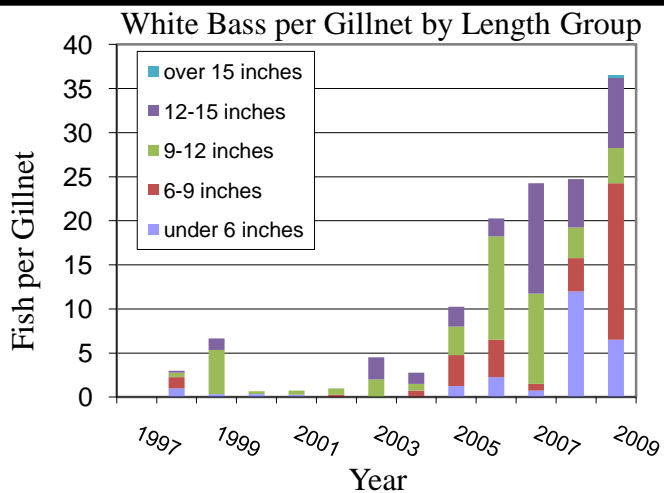
## Walleye

Walleye catch rates were greater than 25 fish per net again in 2009. Even though numbers are high, larger fish are lacking due to high angling pressure and harvest. That means that “keepers” are hard to come by later in the year. Maloney is stocked with walleye fingerlings annually and will receive 40,000 fish in 2010.



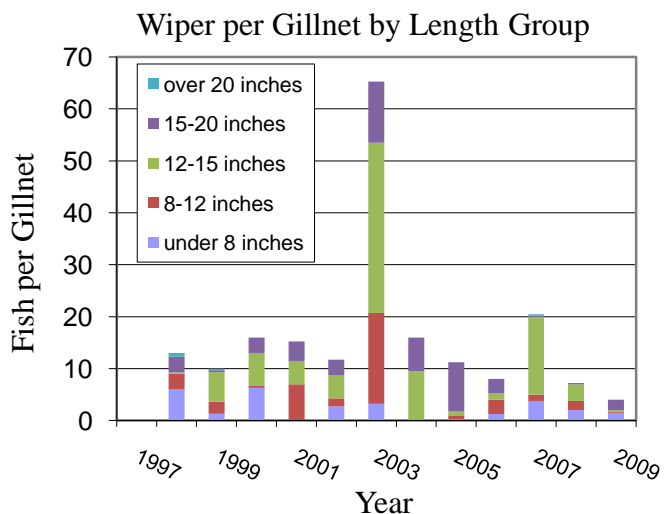
## White Bass

White bass catch rates at Maloney have been very high since 2006. The average was 25 fish per net in 2008 and increased to 35 in 2009. Most of the fish sampled were less than 9 inches but those fish should provide excellent angling in the coming years. White bass are naturally recruiting, for the most part, in Lake Maloney and the system above Lake Maloney. Therefore white bass are only stocked intermittently.



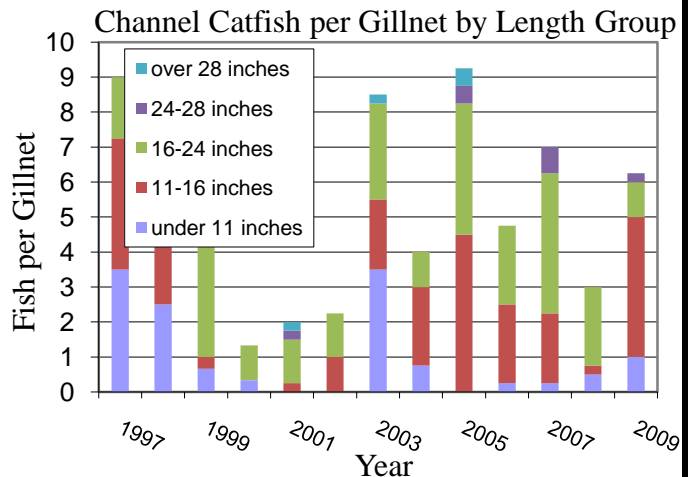
## Wipers

Wiper rates have generally hovered around the 10 fish per net average at Maloney. We have recently decreased the stocking rates due to poor condition and premature harvest. Wipers are intended to provide trophy opportunity for anglers. Catch rates in 2009 averaged about 5 fish per net. There were approximately 12,000 wipers stocked in 2010.

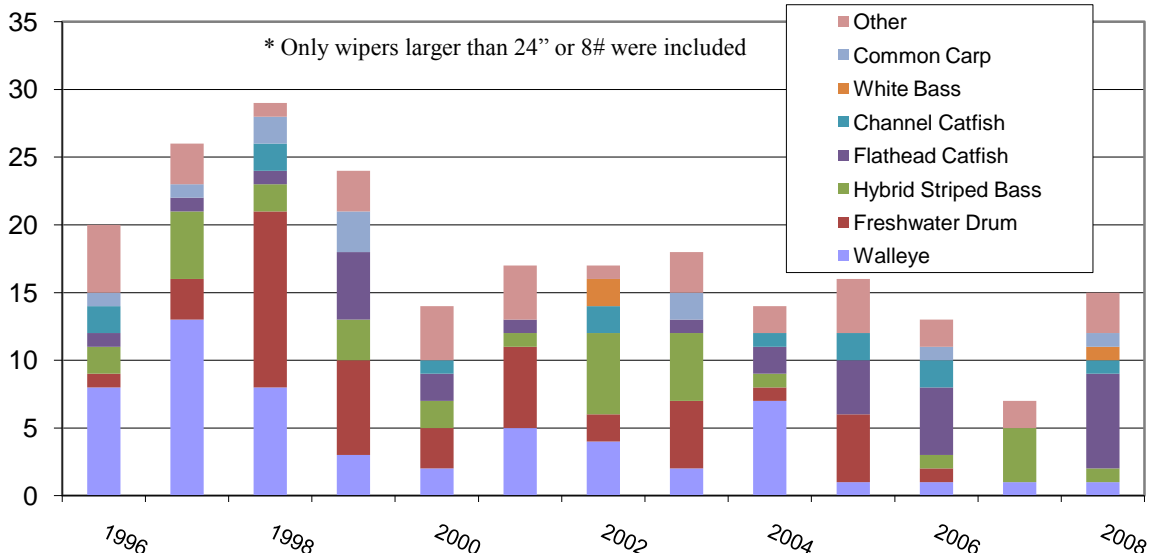


## Channel Catfish

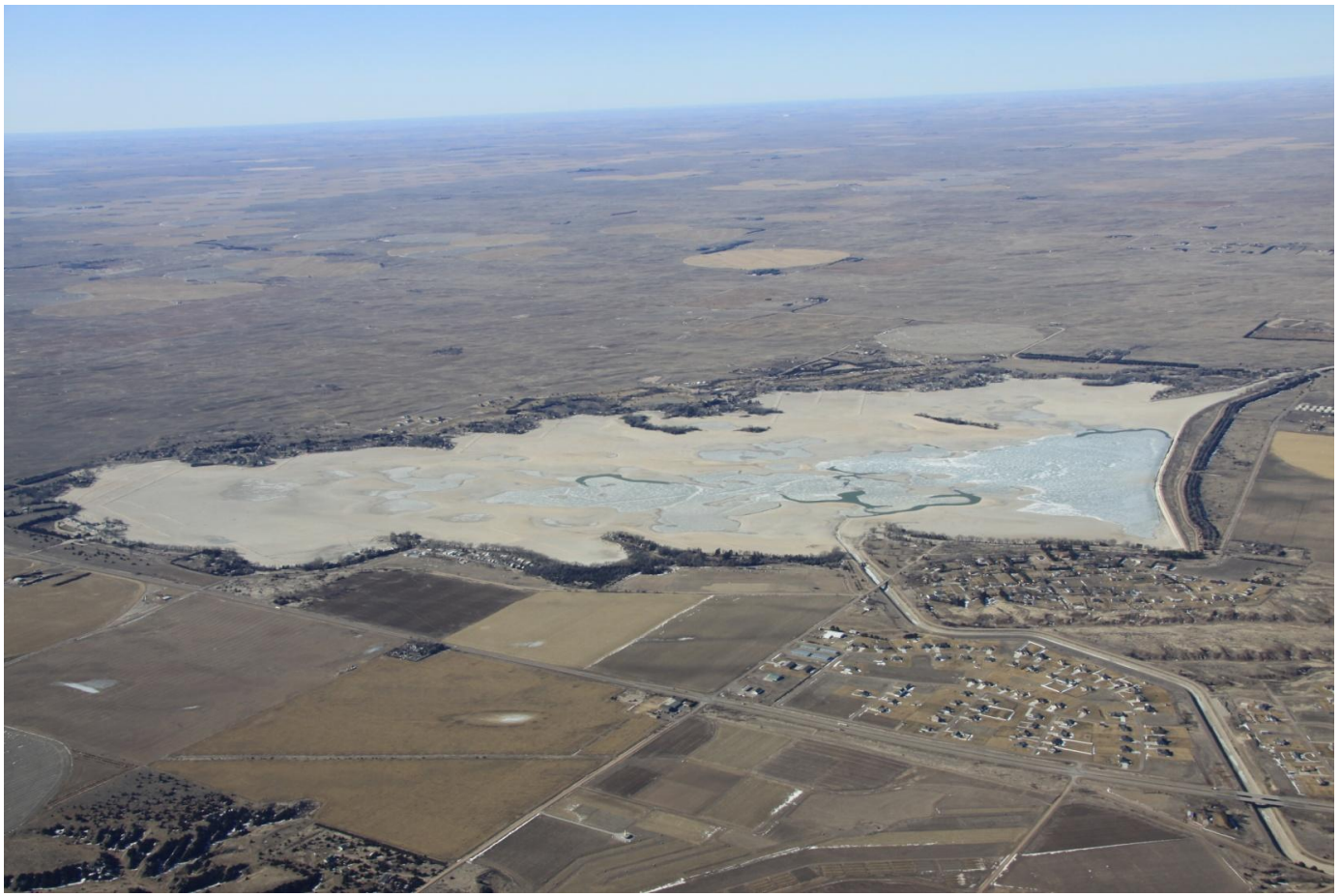
Catch rates for channel catfish in Maloney fluctuate. In 2008, we caught approximately 3 fish per net. Catch rates were just over 6 fish per net in 2009. Most fish sampled were 11-16 inches long. Catfish angling should be good in 2010 as long as fish weren't adversely affected by the winter drawdown.



## Master Angler Awards, Maloney Reservoir 1996-2008 (2009 data not yet available)

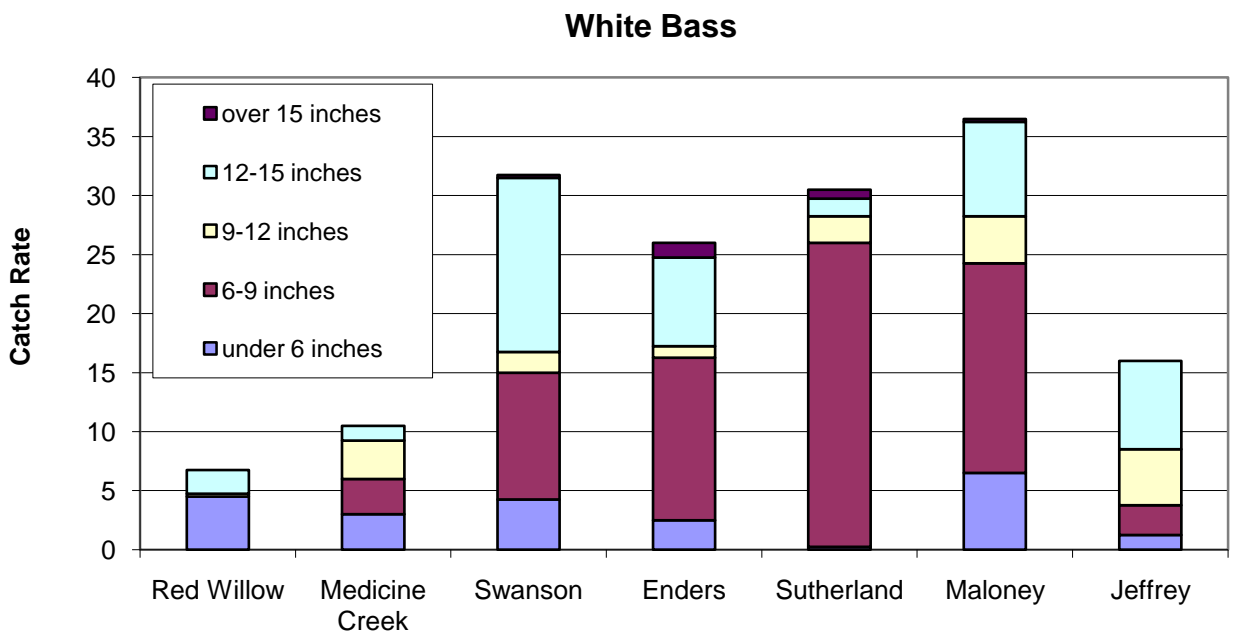
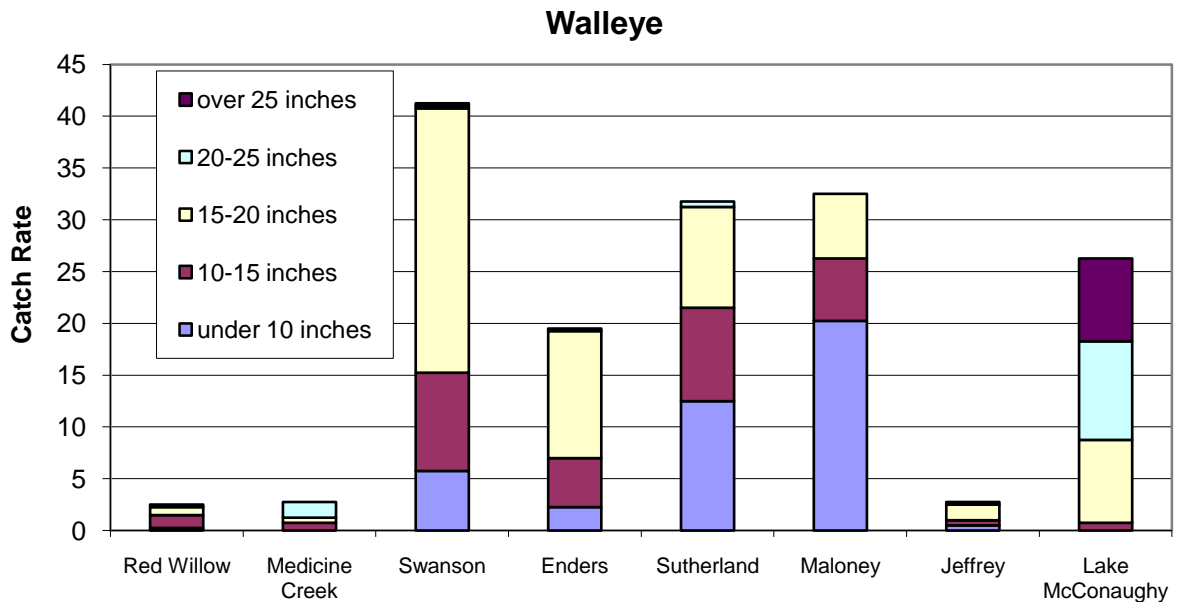


Although the numbers of Master Angler (M.A.) awards given may not necessarily represent the true number of large fish caught (but not reported), the information can be useful for evaluating catch trends. Reported master angler awards have been fairly stable since 2000, but there was a decline in the number of walleye reported in 2008. In total there was 1 walleye, 1 wiper, 7 flathead catfish, 1 channel catfish, 1, white bass, 1 common carp, and 3 other fish reported in 2008.

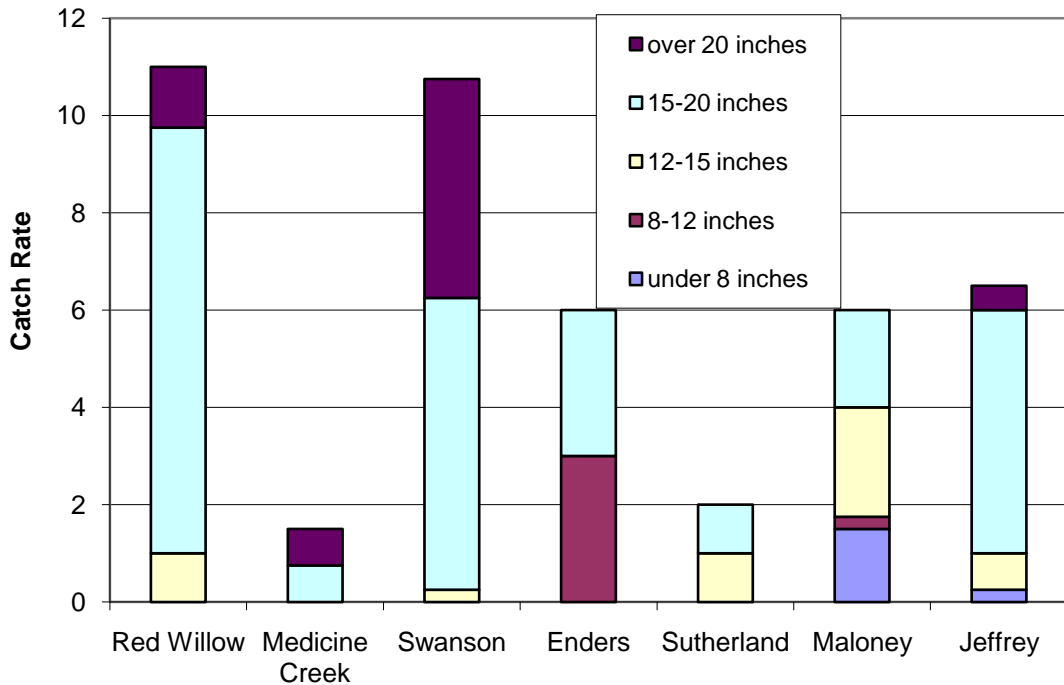


Aerial photo of Lake Maloney taken on 2-16-2010

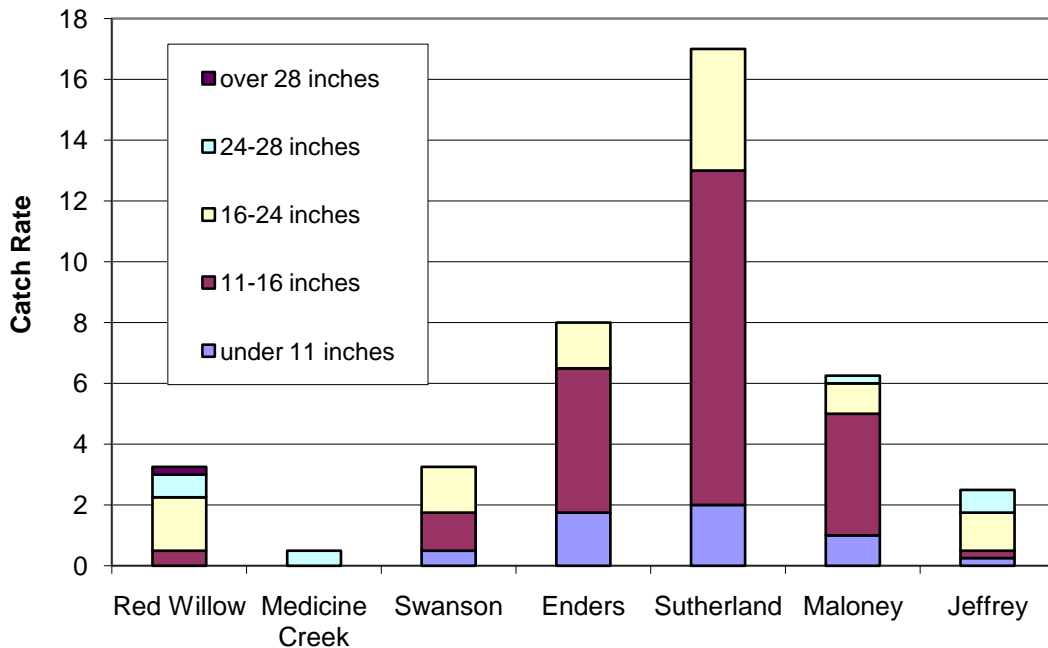
The following graphs compare 2009 walleye, white bass, wiper and channel catfish gill net catch rates between Southwest District reservoirs.



## Wiper



## Channel catfish



For additional information on fisheries management at Maloney contact:

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